

Evacuation

- Because Irene is now bearing down on us at a faster speed, we are issuing a mandatory evacuation order for New Yorkers who live in the low-lying Zone “A” coastal areas in all five boroughs that are at greatest risk of damage related to Irene, including all parts of the Rockaways.
- City Health Commissioner Tom Farley will be working with senior homes and nursing homes, and the two hospitals in the Zone “B” part of the Rockaways to try to find alternative sites for their residents.
- Nevertheless for people who live in private homes, we want you to leave the Rockaways due to its exposure to the ocean and the potential that emergency services may not be provided due to the closing of bridges.
- People should be out of these areas by 5 pm Saturday. In a storm with wind and very high tides there are risks that endanger public safety. I cannot stress it enough. Please: Nature is a force more powerful than us. Better to be safe and sorry.
- The low-lying coastal areas that may be endangered by a storm surge include: Coney Island and Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn.... Far Rockaway and Broad Channel in Queens... South Beach, Midland Beach, and other low-lying areas on Staten Island... Battery Park City in Manhattan... and some small sections of the Bronx.
- We’ve never done a mandatory evacuation before – and we wouldn’t be doing this now if we didn’t think this was serious.

MTA shutdown

- In addition, MTA service, including subways, buses, and railroads, will begin to shut down at noon tomorrow.
- Depending on the effect of the storm MTA service may not be restored in time for rush hour Monday morning.

SHELTER

- As of 4 pm today we are opening 91 emergency facilities. They're a combination of evacuation centers and emergency shelters. They're being staffed by City employees, some on a volunteer basis. We have the capacity to expand that system greatly if needed.
- Yesterday we issued an executive order yesterday afternoon directing all hospitals, nursing homes, and senior homes in our low-lying coastal areas to evacuate their patients today and directed them to complete this process by 8 p.m.
- There are five hospitals in this zone. All of them – Coney Island Hospital, both campuses of Staten Island University Hospital, the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Manhattan, and NYU Medical Center on Manhattan's East Side – are evacuating their patients to other hospitals.
- Yesterday's Executive Order also covered eight nursing homes, one psychiatric facility, and eight adult care facilities. All of them are evacuating as well.

STORM DETAILS

- The National Weather Service has put the entire New York metropolitan area under a hurricane watch – which means that sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or more are forecast – for Saturday evening through Sunday.
- The current forecast is that Irene will reach the New York metropolitan area as a Category One storm. The ground speed of the storm has accelerated; gale forces winds of 40 miles per hour will reach us by 9 pm Saturday.
- We don't yet know where the full brunt of the storm will be felt.
- But in any case, Irene is going to hit New York City with very high winds and heavy rains Saturday night and all through Sunday. It's going to be a very dangerous storm, especially in low-lying areas of the city.

HOMELESS SERVICES

- Another vulnerable population we are concentrating on is the homeless.
- We have four homeless shelters for families and four shelters for single adults in Zone A. The clients of these shelters will be relocated to our Bedford Atlantic shelter in Brooklyn and the El Camino shelter in Jamaica, Queens.
- We are also moving clients out of our intake center at 30th Street and 1st Avenue in Manhattan.
- At the same time, outreach teams are stepping up their activity to bring street homeless clients indoors. We are also taking steps to help those who, because of age, illness, or disability, are homebound.
- On a case-by-case basis, we will authorize “sleep-in services” to help clients who have complex needs and no other supports in the community.
- There are also 15 foster care residential facilities in Zone A. Our Administration for Children’s Services is working closely with the agencies operating these programs to ensure that each facility has a safety plan in place for all children at these facilities.

NYC.GOV

- NYC.gov is currently experiencing more than three times its average volume of traffic, which has made access to the site problematic for some.
- Yesterday, nyc.gov had 4.3 million hits – shattering the previous high of 2.2 million on January 26th. To alleviate this pressure, we began adding additional servers yesterday and are also off-loading some traffic to external commercial servers.
- NYC.gov is back up and running, but if you are unable to access the site at any time over the weekend, you can receive updates via Twitter from @nycmayorsoffice and @notifynyc.
- But if you can’t get through using nyc.gov, call 311.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

- From 9 pm tomorrow until 9 pm Sunday, New Yorkers should take the following precautions.
- First stay indoors.
- Second, avoid being near glass windows. There's a risk of flying debris shattering windows, and that risk increases if you're in a high-rise, on the 10th floor or higher.
- For your own safety, stay in rooms with no or few windows, and close the doors to rooms
- If you live in an apartment on the 10th floor or above, consider asking to stay in an apartment on a lower floor, as the risk of a window blowing out are greater on higher floors.
- And don't stand or congregate in a glassed-in lobby or atrium.
- Third many apartment buildings also have basement or rooftop mechanical equipment, such as water towers, pumps, and water heaters.
- They may be damaged by flooding – so a good precaution is to fill a bathtub or sink with potable water.
- High-rise residents should also be aware that flooding or wind damage may cause power outages that will prevent elevators from operating.
- Because of the danger of falling limbs or trees, for your own safety stay out of City parks on Sunday.

CONSTRUCTION

- The Department of Buildings is issuing a stop work order that will suspend all construction in the five boroughs from 2 p.m. Saturday until 7 a.m. Monday.
- That includes renovations at City Hall and also extends to the operation of tower cranes at the World Trade Center Site.
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- Currently, 13 of the 24 tower cranes active in are city are located at the World Trade Center site.
- This work stoppage will not, however, affect the scheduled opening of the 9/11 Memorial in time for the 10th anniversary of 9/11.
- Since Wednesday, inspectors have been inspecting construction sites across the city to ensure equipment is properly secured.
- Working with other City agencies, they will continue conducting inspections over the weekend to make sure the stop work order is being followed.
- The Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation are inspecting dozens of flood-prone locations to make sure catch basins are clear and able to handle the extra rain water.

NON-MTA TRANSPORTATION

- As Irene approaches, keeping City streets free for buses and emergency vehicles is crucial.
- For that reason, we've suspended alternate side parking and meter rules on Sunday and Monday.
- To ease travel around the City, starting at 9am Saturday we will implement a "zone-fare" plan that will make most rides less expensive and that will encourage group rides and permit livery drivers to make street pick-ups.
- It's the same plan we used during the transit strike of 2005.
- And when and if driving conditions become too hazardous, the Taxi & Limousine Commission has the ability to send text messages to all drivers advising them of that.
- If sustained wind speeds reach 46 miles and navigation becomes difficult, we may stop Staten Island Ferry service.
- Commuter ferry services operated by the Economic Development Corporation will stop after this evening's rush hour.

- Once wind speeds reach 50 miles per hour, we'll take a hard look at closing the bridges under the City's jurisdiction.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES/PERMIT REVOCATIONS

- To clear City streets, we've also revoked City permits for street fairs, block parties, and similar events on Sunday, and in Zone A – low-lying areas – on Saturday too.
- And as to any such activities in any other part of the city scheduled for Saturday, we've amended their permits to require that they stop serving the public by 2 p.m.
- City beaches will be closed Saturday and Sunday and will remain closed until they can be operated safely.
- Similar restrictions have been placed on outdoor TV and film permits.
- Marinas run by the Parks Department will be closed starting 6pm Saturday. All customers will be required to leave.
- The Dave Matthews concert on Governors Island will take place tonight; the concerts scheduled for Saturday and Sunday are cancelled.
- The Mets games Saturday and Sunday have been cancelled.
- Fans going to the Jets-Giants game Saturday should know that MTA service likely will not be available to them.